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Letter dated 14 November 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you a communiqué of the International Conference on Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia under the auspices of the United Nations on the theme "Central Asia: shared past and common future, cooperation for sustainable development and mutual prosperity", held on 10 and 11 November 2017 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19 (a).

(*Signed*) Bakhtiyor **Ibragimov**

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Annex to the letter dated 14 November 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Communiqué of the International Conference on Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia under the auspices of the United Nations (Samarkand, 10 and 11 November 2017)

The International Conference on Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia under the auspices of the United Nations — "Central Asia: shared past and common future, cooperation for sustainable development and mutual prosperity" — took place in Samarkand on 10 and 11 November 2017. It was organized by Uzbekistan in conjunction with the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and the Regional Office for Central Asia of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The Conference was attended by leaders from the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Commonwealth of Independent States, delegations from the countries of Central Asia, Afghanistan, the United States of America, European States, Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, India, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea and others, and also academics, public figures and State officials.

The Conference participants noted that Central Asia, which was located at the crossroads of ancient routes between East and West along the Great Silk Road, had for millennia facilitated dialogue and cross-pollination among the world's cultures, languages and religions. With its huge potential in terms of energy and natural resources and its unique transport and communication possibilities, Central Asia was of vital geopolitical importance and the processes taking place there had an impact on the stability of the entire Eurasian continent.

In that context, it was emphasized that in the modern world the States of Central Asia played a significant role in addressing current issues relating to the strengthening of international security, including neutralization of the threat of the spread of terrorism and extremism; measures to combat drug trafficking, the illegal arms trade, organized crime and trafficking in persons; and the prevention of information-related threats.

The participants noted that security in Central Asia was an essential component of global security. They particularly emphasized the need for closer and more coordinated cooperation among Central Asian countries with regard to addressing new challenges and threats, and also cooperation between them and international and regional organizations and partner countries.

The participants also emphasized the need to strengthen the central role of the United Nations in addressing security challenges and threats in the region. They drew attention to the need for more effective use of preventive diplomacy tools, including the pre-emptive mechanisms of the United Nations and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, in accordance with its mandate.

At the same time, they noted the paramount and decisive role of the States of the region in ensuring peace, security and sustainable development and in encouraging regional and international cooperation in Central Asia through

negotiations and consultations based on consensus, equality and respect for one another's interests.

The countries of Central Asia recognized the importance of strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation on the sustainable and integrated management of water and energy resources in Central Asia, taking into account the interests of all States in the region. To that end, they would hold regular consultations with a view to the swift development of mutually beneficial mechanisms in that sphere that would be sustainable in the long term.

The participants also noted that the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028 would be a good platform for facilitating the achievement of goals relating to water and sanitation at all levels.

The participants noted with satisfaction the positive developments relating to the delimitation and demarcation of State borders, which were an important factor in ensuring peace, stability and security in Central Asia. In that context, they welcomed the signing of an agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan on the demarcation of the Kazakh-Turkmen State border, a treaty between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek State border, and a treaty between the Republic of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan on the tri-border area of the three States.

The participants supported initiatives aimed at bolstering the peaceful political process in Afghanistan, providing assistance in the restoration of socioeconomic infrastructure and integrating the country more actively into the global economy. In that connection, they noted that it was extremely important for the countries of Central Asia to implement projects involving Afghanistan in areas such as energy, transport and communications and investment.

They highlighted the need to exchange information and experience on all aspects of the fight against terrorism and extremism and to develop joint measures and strategies in that area on the basis of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Taking into account the Joint Plan of Action for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia, which had been drawn up with the assistance of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and also the Ashgabat Declaration and the outcome of the High-Level United Nations-Central Asia Dialogue on Implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia, held in Ashgabat on 13 June 2017 and chaired by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the participants noted the need to strengthen cooperation on detecting and forestalling cross-border terrorist activity in Central Asia; cutting off channels for the recruitment of fighters, the financing of terrorism and arms smuggling; ensuring cybersecurity; and protecting cyberspace from extremist attacks.

The representatives of the Central Asian States noted the importance of adopting specific joint measures to prevent the younger generation from becoming involved in the activities of various terrorist and radical groups. In that context, they emphasized the need to pay particular attention to education and spiritual and moral instruction for young people and to foster in them a desire for knowledge and self-improvement.

The participants called for the development of coordinated measures by the States of Central Asia, including in conjunction with UNODC and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), to strengthen the prevention of drug trafficking in the region by attracting additional resources and using new

technologies and methods to combat trafficking and smuggling in narcotics and precursors.

The participants stressed the importance of implementing the 2006 Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and the 2014 protocol on guarantees by the permanent members of the Security Council regarding the implementation of measures for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear security, radioactive waste management, the establishment of reliable mechanisms for cooperation to prevent trafficking in nuclear material and to prevent nuclear terrorism in Central Asia, and the sharing of the positive experience of Central Asian countries with a view to expanding the world's nuclear-free zones.

The participants noted that General Assembly resolution 68/218 on the role of the international community in averting the radiation threat in Central Asia, adopted in 2013, had made an important contribution to addressing problems of environmental security in the region. In that connection, the participants stressed the need to adopt a fresh General Assembly resolution calling for further international support in addressing the problems of the uranium legacy in Central Asia.

All the participants unanimously expressed their readiness to strengthen emerging dialogue processes and to intensify cooperation among the countries of Central Asia, including with regard to the promotion of joint initiatives to ensure regional security, develop trade and cross-border cooperation, and renew and expand transport and communication links, including by opening new bridges, roads, railways and air routes.

The participants expressed their readiness to continue strengthening ties of good neighbourliness and friendship among peoples, to facilitate deeper links in the fields of education, science and technology, innovation, tourism, culture, art and sport, and to continue providing mutual assistance in emergency situations.

The participants welcomed the initiative to hold consultative meetings of the Heads of State of Central Asian countries in order to maintain regular trust-based dialogue and develop coordinated approaches to current regional issues.

The delegates supported the practice of holding regular meetings of Ministers for Foreign Affairs from the countries of Central Asia with a view to discussing current problems in the region. In that connection, they welcomed the signing, on the margins of the Samarkand Conference, of a programme of cooperation among the ministries of foreign affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2018–2019.

The participants called on the States of the region to actively pursue cooperation among the relevant ministries and departments and the authorities of the border regions. They noted the importance of forming partnerships among national parliaments, including by establishing "friendship groups" of parliamentarians. They underlined the need for broad involvement in the process of increasing contact among civic organizations, particularly youth movements, cultural and creative associations, non-governmental organizations, research and analysis centres and other entities.

The delegates called on all United Nations agencies and other international organizations, and also interested Central Asian partner States, to cultivate and strengthen cooperation with States in the region on issues of regional security and sustainable development, in accordance with the priorities, interests, needs and national programmes of Central Asian countries, providing them with the necessary technical, expert, legal, financial and other assistance.

They particularly noted the importance of cooperation in the implementation of promising projects aimed at achieving sustainable development in the region, including projects that would ensure guaranteed access for the States of Central Asia to international sea ports and communications, thereby increasing their transit potential, making them more attractive to investors and improving the conditions for business in the countries of the region.

The participants noted that the current meeting provided a unique opportunity for open and in-depth discussion of the entire range of current problems in Central Asia, which would facilitate the development of joint coordinated decisions on those problems.

The participants supported the proposal that the States of Central Asia should prepare a mutually agreeable draft resolution of the General Assembly on strengthening regional and international cooperation on security, peace and sustainable development in the Central Asian region.

In conclusion, the Conference participants thanked the Government of Uzbekistan, the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia for organizing the high-level Conference.